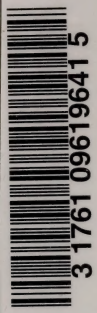
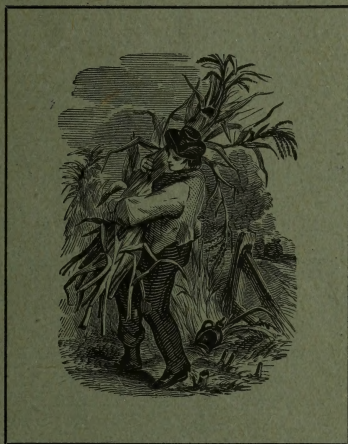


ociol.
Allen

From The
Toronto Humane Society,
83 BAY STREET,
TORONTO, ONT.



AMOS HUNT



AND HIS

STEEL TRAP.

CAUGHT IN HIS OWN TRAP.

BY

MRS. C. M. FAIRCHILD ALLEN.

IN a little hamlet among the Northwest mountains, where the capturing of wild animals forms the chief employment, in winter, of its inhabitants, lived Amos Hunt, with his mother and two sisters. They owned three acres of well-tilled land, which yielded them vegetables for the year round, and in the winter season Amos gathered in, quite an amount of money by his capture of the fur-bearing animals.

It was near Christmas, and the week before the holidays. Amos was more industrious than usual, for he was to go over the mountains, ten miles away, to spend a week visiting his cousin, Julius Manning—the first real visit all by himself. He had been over the route several times with his mother, and knew it well, and had often set his traps near the same mountain path.

Let me describe these traps to you. They were formed of two semicircular pieces of steel, so as to form a complete circle when open, and fastened by a spring. The inside of each of these semicircular pieces was supplied with a row of sharp teeth, and when the animal stepped where he must in order to secure the bait, the trap sprung, and one or two

feet were caught and held fast by these sharp teeth. The trap was fastened to the ground by a stake, and almost always, in his struggle to escape, the poor captive tore the flesh of his feet or legs to the bone. Often he remained for hours in this condition, and the suffering he endured can scarcely be expressed.

But Amos Hunt "never thought" of this. And his mother and sisters evidently "never thought" of this. His father before him had captured animals in this way, and probably he and his companions "never thought" of it.

Amos concluded to mingle a little business with pleasure on that morning before Christmas, as he started with his lunch and a change of clothing neatly packed in his satchel by his mother, who gave him many parting injunctions and stood, with his sisters, at the gate to watch him until he was out of sight. He had two traps set almost in the path of his journey, and he intended to take the animals he confidently expected to find therein, to his cousin for a Christmas present; this would be considered a very nice gift, for the skins of the mink which he frequently caught were sometimes worth several dollars.

As he proceeded on his way, and neared the location of his traps, he discovered a fine mountain-brook mink, struggling to escape from one of them. He grabbed up a stout stick, and hastened to dispatch it by a blow on the head, when suddenly his foot went down, and he felt something clasp tightly around his ankle, and he was thrown violently

to the ground, the chain of the trap having caught on the broken branch of a fallen tree in such a manner that he found it impossible to extricate himself. The trap had been placed directly over the burrow of a mink, and his foot had slipped down through the trap when it sprung.

He did not feel any apprehension at first, for he supposed he would be able to extricate himself; but the chain would not give way, neither would the branch, and he found himself compelled to rest mainly on his back, with his foot elevated, and the teeth of the instrument of torture pressing closer and closer upon the now bare flesh.

Amos was within ten feet of his captured companion, and, after becoming wearied with his exertions to free himself, he turned his eye to the trembling creature, who now, in addition to the pain of torture by the trap, suffered the excess of terror at the near proximity of a creature, the wild animal creation naturally fears and dreads.

Amos was as powerless to liberate his companion as himself, and, as he viewed the hopelessness of his position and thought of the hours he might spend on the cold ground before any relief came, he burst into a passion of tears, and turned his swimming eyes upon his fellow captive. Its broken limb was torn and bleeding, with its fruitless struggles to free itself; for the first time in all his life pity took possession of his soul, and he realized the cruelty he had so long been guilty of.

The little animal now and then uttered low, distressful

cries, and a moisture like human tears filled its eyes. Although for a time absorbed in pity for suffering of which he was the cause, and yet had no power to alleviate, Amos soon keenly felt darting pains shooting from his ankle to above his knees, and in time they began to dart to his shoulder, and he imagined they were shooting all over his body. To add to this, his ankle began swelling and the pain increased, as by this means the teeth of the trap exerted a firmer pressure than before. The moisture of pain stood out on his forehead in great drops, and he panted and trembled even as the innocent sufferer just beyond his reach.

All his ingenuity failed to contrive a means of release, and he could see by the shadows that noon had come and gone. Fortunately, in falling, his satchel had remained within his reach, and he drew from it the lunch his kind and thoughtful mother had prepared for him. How she would have flown to his rescue, could she have known his situation! How he had shouted and called, although he felt certain no human ear would be apt to hear him from that lonely place!

Despite his pain, he ate heartily of the lunch, and threw to the little mink such portions as he thought probable it would eat. This act at first frightened it until it was almost ready to expire, but, as it smelled the food, after a time it began to nibble daintily, intermingling with its repast those distressing cries that touched Amos to the heart.

“Poor little creature!” he ejaculated; “this may be a just punishment for my cruelty. I know now how much my captives have suffered!”

And then he tried to comfort himself by hoping it would live until some chance traveler passed and rescued them both, and then to pay for his thoughtlessness he would nurse the little sufferer, and spare its life and keep it, if it would stay with him.

He thought surely some one would pass within hearing before night, but he was doomed to disappointment; and, as darkness came on, he pictured to himself the horrors he might endure before morning; and days might intervene before he was liberated, for his mother seldom had communication with his uncle's family, and neither would suppose he was not at the house of the other. Few of the larger wild animals infested that region, so he was in no great fear of them, but the prospect of a night upon the cold ground, and himself already chilled, was by no means pleasant to contemplate. As darkness settled fairly down, the half human cries of his fellow captive ceased, and he could only conjecture that it had expired. Would it be his lot, also, to die a slow death by exhaustion and torture? Filled with these dreadful forebodings, and the cold chilling the keener sense of pain he had endured, he fell into an unrefreshing sleep, and awoke at the coldest and most lonesome time in the morning, just before sunrise.

The little mink was silent and still. He could not see

its face, but it made no motion, and he was thankful to believe its sufferings were over.

As for himself, he almost wished it were the same. He knew that the exposure of even that one night, with his now mangled ankle, would result in future suffering not easily remedied, and two or three might be added to it before the end came. As he revolved these gloomy thoughts in his mind he was startled by the rustle of an animal through the bushes, and the well-known form of a dog belonging to one of his neighbors bounded past him. The master was not far behind, and Amos sobbed for joy as he turned his head and met his kindly, wondering eye.

"Hallo, youngster, what are you doing there? Pretty late for star gazing ; with your toes turned up, too!"

He immediately saw the difficulty, and raising Amos in his arms, soon placed him on a log while he proceeded carefully to remove the trap from his swollen ankle and contrive the best means by which to get him home.

"I might get the old horse and wagon, but then you don't want to sit here more than an hour longer with that 'foot on you ;' so I guess you better mount my back, and I'll carry you myself;" and he lifted Amos carefully so he could rest on one foot preparatory to mounting.

"Wait a minute," said Amos. "I've a fellow captive out there in that trap ; if he's dead, I want you to bury him right here, fur and all ; for I'll never have any money made off him, and I'll never catch mink or any other animals in

that fashion again. If he's still alive, I want you to take him up carefully, and I'll take him home."

The old hunter walked over to the apparently dead little animal, but it faintly moved its head as he approached.

"The creature'll bite, if it's got any life in it," said the old hunter.

"Put my jacket 'round it," replied Amos. "I want to take it home."

He said this in such a way that the old man, after looking at him intently a moment, took the jacket Amos had already pulled off, extricated the almost lifeless little sufferer from the trap, and wrapping it carefully, put it in his great pocket; then backing up to the log, he made Amos mount his back, and they started homeward, preceded by the old man's dog, who headed the procession in due lordly style, and by his barking at the gate announced the fact of their arrival.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the mother and sisters of Amos were as much distressed at his experience as they were grateful for his liberation, and at Amos's almost peremptory request they set about dressing the mutilated limb of the little mink with soft batting, and provided a tender spring chicken for the refreshment of both the unfortunates.

The mink, whose name thereafter became "Tippet," objected very much, at first, to being nursed, and to having his wounded leg dressed; but he soon began

to understand his friends, and after Amos had related his experience, amply embellished with the recital of his thoughts as he lay helpless upon the ground, those who before had "never thought" about animal suffering, *began* to think, and right cheerfully indulged him in his "wish" to have a trap which should not wound the animal when it captured it; and many a time after that, with Tippet in his pocket, he roamed the mountain-path, and set his "cage-trap" which caught his game just as securely, and subjected them to no wounds or injury.

A trap which is just as cruel as the one in which the little mink was caught, is the steel Rat-trap. Many a poor rat is held helpless and in pain for hours, before it is taken out and killed. We must prevent the use of such traps as far as we can, either for wild animals or for those that invade our houses or stables. Every creature that must be killed can be killed in a merciful way, instead of a cruel way.

Tippet was very cunning and sly, and lived to a good old age for a mink, and after his death Amos made his grave quite near the house, under a beautiful evergreen tree, and Tippet was never forgotten.



The Women's Branch of the Pennsylvania Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,
118 South Seventeenth Street, Philadelphia.